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M E M O R A N D U M

*To:* Anne Messerly, Noreen Light, Randy Spalding, Washington Student Achievement Council

*From:* Kate Nielson, Policy Analyst, National Governors Association

*Re:* High School and Beyond Plans

Thank you for your inquiry about the High School and Beyond plans. Below is information about similar-style plans in seven states, focusing on four particular issues where available:

* The history and development of each states’ plan;
* The associated template or guidelines;
* The online resources available for each states’ plan; and
* Evidence about their efficacy.

The **Kentucky** experience is covered in-depth, and **Vermont** is highlighted as an example of a state that is currently undergoing the creation of a personalized plan system. Snapshots of the activities in **Colorado**, **Delaware**, **Indiana**, **New Mexico**,and **North Carolina** are also provided.

In looking through these state examples and assessing the Washington system, consider the following issues:

* Should plans for required? For which grades?
* How can usage be driven and increased?
* Who should be involved – students, parents/guardians, counselors, teachers, other school personnel?
* What are the plans attempting to accomplish – course planning for high school, exploring college options and majors, creating a path into a career?

Using those questions as a guide should help lead design changes to the High School and Beyond system.

**Kentucky**

In 2002, Kentucky adopted a requirement that all 6th-12th graders complete an [*Individualized Learning Plan*](http://education.ky.gov/educational/CCadv/ilp/Pages/default.aspx) (ILP) every year. It became clear that the paper-based system was not serving students adequately. In 2005 the Kentucky Department of Education issued an RFP soliciting bids for the development of an electronic version, which would feature the following characteristics:

* Be available to students, parents, and educators 24 hours a day, 7 days a week;
* Automatically transfer with students as they moved schools by tying into the student data management system to eliminate redundant data entry;
* Allow schools, districts, and the Department of Education to generate valuable real-time reports on students’ ILP content; and
* Enable consistent standards to be implemented and tracked across the state.

[*Career Cruising*](http://public.careercruising.com/us/en) received the contract. Initial planning, which included teachers, parents, counselors and students, focused on integrating the state student data management system, customizing the Career Cruising Portfolio tool to include state-specific components, and developing user-friendly reports and administrative tools. The finalized system features five tools: student ILP, parent/guardian ILP tool, school ILP administration tool, district ILP administration tool, and state ILP reporting system. During the fall of 2006, representatives from the Department of Education, the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority and

Career Cruising held 80 training sessions for teachers, administrators and students to learn how to use the system. There is also a [self-evaluation tool](http://education.ky.gov/educational/CCadv/ilp/Documents/ImplementationRubric.pdf) for schools to use as they implement the ILP program.

A set of [ILP Completion Standards](http://www.b-g.k12.ky.us/userfiles/1374/CompletionStandardsKYILP.pdf) was created to ensure consistency across the state. The standards layout completion criteria for each grade level in the areas of advisement activities, career exploration and assessments, goals and plans, activities, experiences and awards, and education plan.

The foundation of the Career Cruising system is Career Matchmaker. To begin, students answer a set of questions about their likes and dislikes. Based on their answers, 40 career matches are found and ranked. There are hundreds of jobs within the program that students can research. For each job, there is a recording of two people who have those jobs who speak to students about their likes and dislikes. The program allows students to search all the career and technical schools, four-year schools, and graduate schools in the U.S. The program also contains over 1,500 scholarships and has the capability of narrowing down this number to scholarships that fit the individual student. Based on what the students have added to their ILPs, the system can create a resume. The program also creates a four-year high school plan based on the student’s college and career goals. Ideally, it is reviewed regularly by school counselors or teachers throughout high school to track progress and any shifts in aspirations. There is an online [guided tour](http://education.ky.gov/educational/CCadv/ilp/Documents/GuidedTourKY_EN.pdf) and information about a [trainer program](http://www.careercruising.com/ilp) (username: ilp15977, password: training).

There is no data available about the efficacy of the ILP program, but feedback has been positive and during the 2006-07 school year, the system recorded more than one million student logins and 41 million system page views. During non-summer months for the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years, roughly 20-25 percent of students statewide logged into the system. Schools are encouraged to use the ILP system often, but usage in some schools is much higher than in others.

**Vermont**

Vermont recently passed [Act 77](http://www.leg.state.vt.us/docs/2014/Acts/ACT077.pdf), requiring [*Personalized Learning Plans*](http://education.vermont.gov/plp-working-group/main) (PLP) for students in grades 7-12. Every school will have to design a process for PLPs to be implemented by 2015. The Vermont Agency of Education created several tools to help schools with this endeavor, including a [school/district self-assessment survey](http://education.vermont.gov/plp-working-group/agency-resources/self-assessment), conceptual frameworks for [adults](http://education.vermont.gov/documents/EDU-PLP_Conceptual_Framework_for_Adults.pdf) and [students](http://education.vermont.gov/documents/EDU-PLP_Conceptual_Framework_for_Students.pdf), a [critical elements guide](http://education.vermont.gov/documents/EDU-PLP_Critical_Elements.pdf) to assist with format selection, a [template](http://education.vermont.gov/documents/EDU-PLP_Sample_Template.pdf), a [crosswalk](http://education.vermont.gov/documents/EDU-PLP_Crosswalk_of_Student_Plans.pdf) with other student plans, and school-level step-by-step process guides to creating PLPs with regard to [process](http://education.vermont.gov/plp-working-group/practice), [academic standards](http://education.vermont.gov/plp-working-group/academic-standards), [policy](http://education.vermont.gov/plp-working-group/policy) and [public will](http://education.vermont.gov/plp-working-group/public-will).

The PLP process asks students to develop a profile and identify goals, make a plan to meet those goals then work on meeting them, and finally to assess, reflect, and revise the PLP. The core components of the PLP are the student profile, individual student goals and action steps, learning expectations, transition plans, and reflection. Parents must also be involved in the development, monitoring and annual review of the PLO, and reviews must be conducted at least once a year. The PLP can be documented either on paper or electronically.

**Colorado**

The Colorado legislature passed an [act](http://www.leg.state.co.us/clics/clics2012a/csl.nsf/fsbillcont3/CD3C8673214EEF8C872579CD00625FE2?Open&file=1345_enr.pdf) creating standards, and the State Board of Education adopted [regulations](http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/ICAP%20Rules%202013.pdf) creating guidance, for [*Individual Career and Academic Plans*](http://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/icap) (ICAP) for students in grades 9-12. ICAPs are intended to assist students and their parent/guardian in exploring postsecondary careers and educational opportunities, aligning course work and curriculum, applying to postsecondary education institutions, securing financial aid, and ultimately entering the workforce. Each plan is required to include several [indicators](http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/icapitemsmatrix.pdf), including career exploration, academic progress, postsecondary planning, and financial literacy, and the Department of Education has guidance on associated [grade-level milestones](http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/icapgradelevelmilestones.pdf).

**Delaware**

The [*Student Success Plan*](http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/students_family/rhss/files/Delaware%20Student%20Success%20Plan2.pdf) (SSP) was introduced during the 2007-08 school year and is required for 8th-12th graders. Each plan covers a minimum of five years, including one year beyond high school, and is developed and updated at least annually by the student, the student’s advisor, at least one other staff member, and the student’s parent/guardian. The student’s plan includes courses needed in preparation for immediate entry into the workforce or opportunities in postsecondary education. The plan also includes the support services necessary for the student to graduate from high school. Like Kentucky, Delaware uses the [*Career Cruising*](http://public.careercruising.com/us/en) program. This [FAQ](https://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/students_family/rhss/files/DelawareSSPFAQ.pdf) includes regulatory language establishing SSPs and completion standards to guide individuals through the process.

**Indiana**

Indiana requires students to have an individual graduation plan for grades 6-12. In 6th grade, students develop an [*Initial Graduation Plan*](http://www.in.gov/learnmoreindiana/files/2010-2011_6th_Grade_Grad_Plan_from_OnTrack.pdf) that outlines career exploration activities. Those plans guide the development of [*Individual Graduation Plans*](http://www.in.gov/21stcenturyscholars/2517.htm) (IGP), which are created in 9th grade. The foundation of the system is the [Career Planning Timeline](http://www.in.gov/dwd/abe/files/IceMiddleHS.pdf), which provides grade level tasks to allow students to track their progress. The timeline takes students through five steps: learn about myself; explore occupations; plan for education; plan for work; find a job. IGPs can be created on [paper](http://www.in.gov/learnmoreindiana/files/2011_Grad_Plan.pdf) or online. The state uses the [*Indiana Career Explorer*](http://www.indianacareerexplorer.com/default.htm) tool (created by [*Kuder*](http://www.kuder.com/)) for the online option. [Learn More Indiana](http://www.in.gov/learnmoreindiana/), which is led by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, helps to guide and support the program.

**New Mexico**

In 2007, the New Mexico legislature passed [SB561](http://www.nmlegis.gov/sessions/07%20Regular/final/SB0561.html), which requires that all students complete a [*Next Step Plan*](http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/PEDNextStepPlan.html) (NSP) at the end of grades 8-11. Each students’ plan sets forth the coursework for the grades remaining until high school graduation and explains any differences from previous interim next-step plans. As part of the NSP process, each student must research personal career interests or goals, plan postsecondary education, explore financial aid opportunities, and examine industry certification or other career options. There is a [NSP Template](http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/NexStepDocs/Next%20Step%20Plan%20Template%20Form%20Only%20V2.0%20final.docx) that can be downloaded, and guidance to complete the [document](http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/NexStepDocs/NSP%20Template%20manual%20v2%201final%205.7.12.pdf), but it is not internet-based. Plans are filed with the school principal and signed by the student, the student's parent, and the student's guidance counselor or other school official charged with coursework planning for the student.

**North Carolina**

North Carolina does not require personalized plans, but 72 districts in the state use the [*Futures for Kids*](http://www.f4k.org/) (F4K) system (which partners with *Career Cruising*) to provide comprehensive, individualized career planning to middle and high school students across the state. The system offers electronic portfolios for students, as well as career and learning styles inventories, career profiles, and a résumé builder. Additionally, 800 experienced volunteer career coaches answer questions and offer advice via message boards. A [study](http://www.sas.com/en_us/news/press-releases/2012/september/evaasfutures.html) found that students who use F4K make more progress than their peers, based on higher End-of-Course (EOC) and End-of-Grade (EOG) test scores. Results were especially strong in mathematics.

**Additional Resources**

The Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy developed a [brief](http://www.issuelab.org/click/kc_download1/student_learning_plans_supporting_every_students_transition_to_college_and_career/renniecenter) on student learning plans for Massachusetts. It includes data about all of the states that require such plans (23 states as of 2011), state trends, effectiveness, implementation, and policy considerations.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about policies discussed in this brief, please contact me at [knielson@nga.org](mailto:knielson@nga.org) or 202.624.5319.